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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/722,943	11/25/2003	Yukinori Midorikawa	980765D3/LH	9621
1933	7590	01/14/2005	EXAMINER	
FRISHAUF, HOLTZ, GOODMAN & CHICK, PC 767 THIRD AVENUE 25TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10017-2023			BOTTORFF, CHRISTOPHER	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3618	

DATE MAILED: 01/14/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/722,943	MIDORIKAWA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Christopher Bottorff	3618

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 November 2004.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 2 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 3-17 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 25 November 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/207,911.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election of Species II, depicted in Figures 44-48, in the reply filed on November 29, 2004 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claim 1 is withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Claims 2-17 are under consideration. Claims 1-17 remain pending.

Priority

Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d). The certified copy has been filed in parent Application No. 09/207,911, filed on December 9, 1998.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on March 25, 2003 was considered by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Frantom et al. US 4,655,312.

Frantom et al. disclose an automotive passenger restraint and protection apparatus for an automotive vehicle having a seatbelt 10. See Figure 1. The apparatus comprises a motor that drives a retractor 14; seatbelt attaching state detecting means 38 for detecting whether the seatbelt is in a state attached to the occupant or in a state disconnected from the occupant; danger degree detecting means 28, 32 for detecting a significant degree of danger of collision of the automotive vehicle; and control means 30 for controlling the motor so as to retract the seatbelt to a limit thereof and then protract the seatbelt to thereby give a predetermined amount of looseness to the seatbelt. See column 3, lines 10-12, 33-39, 40-46, and 66-68, and column 4, lines 1-12.

The control means controls the motor so as to give a first predetermined amount of looseness to the seatbelt when the significant degree of danger is not detected by the danger degree detecting means while the seatbelt is detected to be in said state attached to the occupant. See column 3, lines 46-55. The control means further controls the motor so as to give a second predetermined amount of looseness to the seatbelt which is smaller than the first predetermined amount of looseness when the

significant degree of danger is detected by the danger degree detecting means while the seatbelt is detected to be in the state attached to the occupant. See column 14, lines 7-19.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3-17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The detecting means of the prior art are not structured such that they detect danger in the manner defined in claim 3, in combination with the further limitations of claim 3. Also, the control means of the prior art are not arranged to control a motor as defined in claims 4-17, in combination with the further limitations of the prior art.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Taguchi et al., Tsuge et al. US 4,511,097, Tsuge et al. US 4,553,625, Tsuge et al. US 4,572,543, Sack et al., Obara et al., Thomas et al., Fernandez, Bauer et al., Yanagi et al., Mazur et al. US 5,906,393, and Mazur et al. US 6,311,112 disclose vehicle seatbelt systems. Kitagawa et al., Uemura et al., Dixon, Faye, and Shimizu et al. disclose vehicle safety systems that utilize various sensors.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher Bottorff whose telephone number is (703) 308-2183. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chris Ellis can be reached on (703) 308-2560. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Christopher Bottorff



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